
THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT! USING TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING AND COPING SKILLS

MERANDA ROY, M.S.

DEMETRIA ENNIS-COLE, PH.D.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

DEPARTMENT OF LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As a result of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- List common challenges that college students with autism face regarding executive functioning and coping skills.
- List practical accommodations that can be used to support college students with ASD.
- Describe apps that can be used as academic supports.

MEET COLIN & ELLIOT



- Challenges you notice
- Accommodations being provided

COMMON CHALLENGES IN COLLEGE

- Wide range of functioning and abilities – not everyone will be the same
- Communication and social skill deficits
- Common “Hidden” Challenges:
 - Sensory perceptions
 - Motor skills
 - Executive functioning
 - Coping skills

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Executive Functioning Skills:

- Organization
- Planning
- Time-Management
- Working memory

Common Behaviors:

- Inattentive or bored
- Literal thinking
- Unclear sense of time
- Disorganized

CHALLENGES

- Lack of difficulties with general organization and planning skills
- Problems with impulsivity and problem-solving skills
- Trouble monitoring themselves in the completion of a goal

PRACTICAL ACCOMMODATIONS

- Work with student to help determine ways for them to stay on track with assignments (e.g., checklists, periodic check-ins, peer mentors)
- Provide hands on learning, models, demonstrations and other visuals
- Encourage the use of organizational tools that they may have used previous (new environment may need assistance with building new routines)
- Common academic supports: extended deadlines on major projects, extra time for tests, separate quiet places for test taking
- Audience suggestions?

APPS FOR EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Suggestions from Beyond BookSmart.com

- Will not likely transform students
- Will provide support and scaffolding

How to select the best App?

1. Identify areas of executive weakness
2. Find apps that practice and support those skills.
 - Planning, working memory, organization, and time management

APPS FOR EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Executive Skills	App Name	Description	Platforms	Price
Planning	30/30	Time tracking: helps break up work time vs break time Planning: users must prioritize tasks & determine amount of time to complete tasks	Not available on all platforms Searched: 30/30 timer	Varied Free options
Working memory	Quizlet	Digital flashcards; terms and definitions. Website is best for inputting information and app is best for studying on the go Also offers pre-made flashcards and mini-games to play	All	Free

APPS FOR EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Executive Skills	App Name	Description	Platforms	Price
Organization	YouNote!	Note-taking: notes using a variety of different methods (typing, hand written, audio-recorded); can be organized	Not available on all platforms Searched: Note-taking	Varied Free options
Organization	Google Calendar	Digital calendar: upcoming assignments, obligations, and/or appointments Can be synched across multiple devices	All	Free Need Google account (free)
Time Management	inClass	Comprehensive: add class time, professor information, homework, assignments Attach recorded content, files, and notes Can set alarms and prioritize tasks	Not available on all platforms Searched: Class schedule	Varied Free options

COPING SKILLS

Coping Skills:

- **Anxiety**
- **Stress**

Common Behaviors:

- Bewildering, rude or disruptive
- Inattentive or bored
- Trouble staying on topic
- May display the opposite emotion when stressed

CHALLENGES

- Common coping behaviors may make others uncomfortable (e.g., body rocking, pacing, waving or flapping, fixation on a particular topic or item, abruptly leave with no explanation)
- Social interactions and group work are often stressful and anxiety provoking
- Sensory perception can interfere with classroom behaviors (e.g., flickering lights, noises can be a distraction)

PRACTICAL ACCOMMODATIONS

- Discreetly ask the student if something is overwhelming, if they need help, or if they would like to leave for a short period
- Do not discourage coping behaviors unless it is truly disruptive
- Allow students to bring “comfort” items or other sensory items to class
- Work with the student to determine appropriate cues: one for teacher signaling it’s okay for a break and student signaling teacher they are overwhelmed or confused
- Audience Suggestions?

APPS FOR COPING SKILLS

There are A LOT of apps!

“12 Free Apps to Help You Beat Stress” from [ThisWayUp](#)

How to select the best App?

1. Identify areas of coping weakness
2. Find apps that practice and support those skills.
 - Anxiety, stress, meditation

APPS FOR COPING SKILLS

Coping Skills	App Name	Description	Platforms	Price
Anxiety	MindShift	Anxiety Management: test anxiety, perfectionism, social anxiety, performance anxiety, worry, panic, and conflict	All	Free
Anxiety	SAM	Anxiety Management: learn more about anxiety Build your own anxiety toolkit (customization to your needs)	All	Free
Stress	Breathe2relax	Breathing: focused breathing to decrease 'fight-or-flight' responses	All	Free

APPS FOR COPING SKILLS

Coping Skills	App Name	Description	Platforms	Price
Stress	Pacifica	Cognitive behavioral therapy and meditation Track mood, health, daily goals, and a thought diary.	All	Basic: Free Full access: 8.99/month
Meditation	Headspace	Guided Meditation: unique daily guided meditations, interesting facts and figures/progress reports Variety of topics such as sleep, focus, and exercise	All	Basic: Free Full access: 12.99/month
Meditation	Calm	Guided Meditation: daily meditations that vary from 3 – 25 minutes Variety of topics such as sleep stories, breathing exercises, calming music, etc.	All	Basic: Free Full access: did not state/1 time fee

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Executive Functioning Skills:

- **A Day in the Life of a College Student with Executive Function Challenges**
<https://www.beyondbooksmart.com/executive-functioning-strategies-blog/a-day-in-the-life-of-a-college-student-with-executive-function-challenges>
- **College Executive Function Coaching**
<https://www.beyondbooksmart.com/college-executive-function-coaching>

Coping Skills:

- **Mental Health Apps from Amherst College**
<https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/health-safety-wellness/counseling/wellness/self-care-and-stress-reduction/mental-health-apps>
- **Apps from Loyola University Maryland**
<https://www.loyola.edu/departments/counseling-center/students/apps>



THANK YOU!

Questions or Comments

Please contact Meranda Roy

merandaroy@my.unt.edu



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